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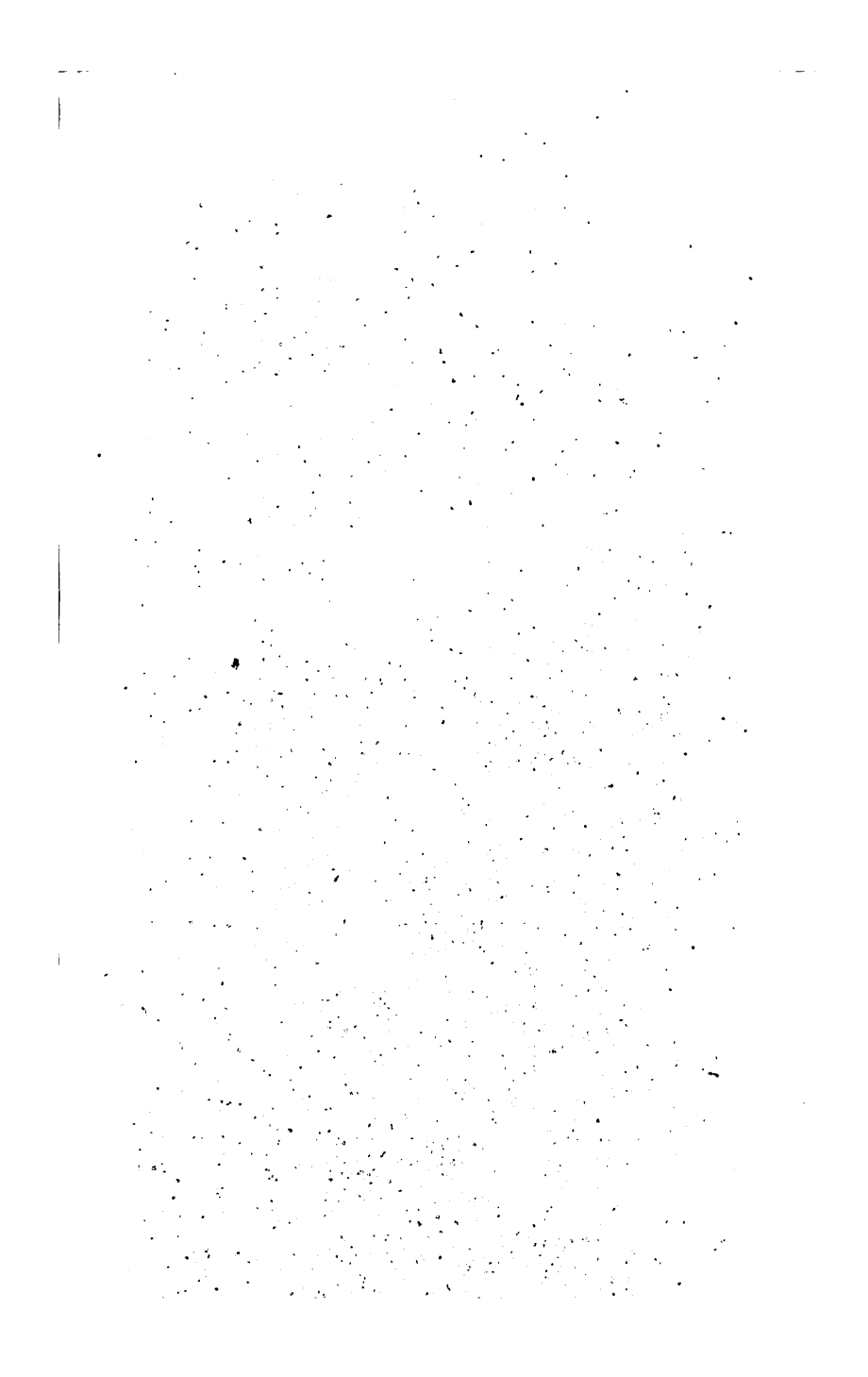
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37.

230.







THE  
BRIDAL OF NAWORTH.

A Poem,

IN THREE CANTOS.

---

"Mille trahens varios adverso sole colores."

Virg. Æn. 4.

O delente principio; ohimè, qual fine  
Gia mi s' annuncia?

Tasso L' Amint.

---

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230.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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A SKETCH of the events narrated in the following poem, as they really occurred, may be found in Burns and Nicholson's History of Cumberland, a short extract from which is subjoined to the following poem. Being of no leading importance as matters of history, the Author has ventured to make such alterations with them as best suited his views. Naworth Castle, Cumberland, where the principal scene is laid, is situated on the south side of the river Irthing, a short distance from Brampton. It is now the property of the Earl of Carlisle, whose good taste is evinced in the preservation of its numerous antiquities. It was once the residence of William Lord Howard, known by the name of "Belted Will." The private rooms have secret communication with the dungeons. The principal hall, which is large and lofty, is adorned with paintings, other rooms have also paintings and are hung with tapestry, the chapel has a panelled ceiling; it contains much ancient armour, and on the altar screen are portraits of the patriarchs, and of the kings of Judah. See the "Naworth Castle" beautifully illustrated in Fisher's Views of Cumberland.





## PREFACE.

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I SHOULD think the traveller in Boccalini who got off his horse to kill grass-hoppers instead of minding his way, would have made the most admirable prefaces in the world, having so fine a conception of the true art of most laboriously doing nothing. The only thing a good writer in this style ought *really* to do, should be to announce to his readers the arrival of a literary wonder, smoking hot from the press; and as this wonder does not conform to any rule, it ought to be his first endeavour to bend to it, by very

graceful and imperceptible curves, every established precept, in order to prove that it exhibits more genius with fewer faults than is to be found in the best works of the most celebrated authors, ancient or modern, and to conclude with a modest assurance that he himself is the great original. As for myself, I have joined the race of scribblers, and entreat you, gentle reader,

“In mercy spare us when we do our best  
To make as much waste paper as the rest.”

For an author to affect indifference about the fate of his works is ludicrously inconsistent. To betray too much concern for them is a mark of weakness equally culpable.

“Turpe est difficiles habere nugas,  
Et stultus labor est ineptiarum.”

I frankly confess the gratification it will afford me, if the present volume shall be rewarded

with the laurels due to poetic excellence. The class to which I have endeavoured to assimilate this slight performance is not among the walks of the higher sons of inspiration, nor is it calculated to urge me beyond the bounds prescribed by reflective reason while listening to the suggestions of hope. I am old enough not to be too sanguine in my expectations—I am yet too young to despair.

On committing to the care of the world that which, if condemned by its wisdom, cannot longer be of value to myself, I have nothing either to solicit or to demand; without my interference, in despite of every effort of my own, the world *will* do me justice; it is only the vain man that requires more. Perhaps, like Shylock, I may find her upon me before I am prepared to receive her. The Portia that shall stand forth to develope the concealed defects of my

plea, shall have my gratitude, for such a one is my truest friend ; and, to the Gratiano who then mocks me with his jest of triumph, I will only say with a patient shrug that the author—

“*Stolidam præbet tibi vellere barbam*”—

Holds out his foolish beard for thee to pluck.

THE  
BRIDAL OF NAWORTH.

—  
CANTO I.  
—

I.

THE morn arose on Naworth's stately tower,  
Brave knights were in the hall, bright ladies in the  
bower ;  
Deeds of high sort and gallant feats were done.  
Night came, and fiercer revel was begun :  
The revel loud, the wassail deep and long,  
And border minstrelsy, and martial song ;  
Wall roar'd to wall, from dungeon-keep to tower,  
And roofs laugh'd loud, while shook the trampled floor ;

Rival with rival pledg'd, no more abhorr'd,  
And serf partook carousal with his lord. 10  
But time disdains to stay at mortal call:  
Hush'd is the din of tongues, and clear'd the hall;  
The mirth has ceas'd; the rev'lers one by one  
Have ta'en them each their several way and gone.  
Night comes in solemn darkness deeper down, 15  
And huddled clouds in heavier masses frown:  
Viewless all objects; darkness all conceals;  
No moon her beam, no star a ray, reveals;  
Apalling silence aids th' oblivious gloom;  
Nature appears all death, all earth a tomb. 20

## II.

Chang'd like the scene from gay to grave, there sate  
In the high hall, grown dark and desolate,  
The mighty chieftain of a servile horde,  
Stern in the field, and frigid at the board.  
His was the fortress and its wide demesnes, 25  
The power, at will, to bloody all its scenes;

With murder, rapine, vengeance, he might scourge  
His feudal realms, or heavier fetters forge.  
The power was his, and not the power alone,  
He had the will to do——what he hath done. 10

## III.

Fled is each guest; the dying ember's rays  
Wax faint, and flicker with inconstant blaze,  
And shed a lurid gleam upon the board,  
Where stands no banquet, and where sits no lord.  
In an embrasur'd window's deep recess, 20  
With thoughts which harass most in loneliness,  
Is stern De Vallibus. His eye no more  
Beams with the mirthful flash it lately wore,  
But, darkly brooding on some fearful theme,  
He courts not slumber——scarce yet dreads its dream. 25  
What keeps him here at this untimely hour?  
Perchance some sudden threat of hostile power,  
Or general shock of the unstable state,  
Requires him forth to action or debate.



His strangely working brow inspires affright ;      45  
His wild eye burns with fierce unholy light,  
By hate engendered, or more deadly guile,  
Seen in the look of joy and half-raised smile.  
One moment to a blaze his wild glance grows,  
And flashing through the midnight darkness glows, 50  
As, peering long into the gloom of night,  
He looks and strains each aching nerve of sight.  
But not alone the feelings thus expressed,  
One shakes as strongly as these fire the breast ;  
Who gaz'd on him had mark'd, with secret awe, 55  
Signs such as dread from human hearts can draw :  
An anxious paleness blanches o'er his face,  
And his eye glares and rolls from place to place,  
But more in act than look impatience grows ;  
Now fast, now slow, along the hall he goes ;      60  
In fever'd restlessness and fitful gloom,  
He treads with hurried steps the spacious room ;  
Not void of caution—every step, unheard,  
Awakes no echo, nor doth mutter'd word

Betray to quickest ears a tale of aught      65  
To solve the folded myst'ry of his thought.

## IV.

Whate'er he dreaded, purposed, wished, or knew,  
This strange effect, in him at least, was new.  
In feudal horrors nurs'd, and border strife,  
His falchion strove from youth to middle life;      70  
Strange to no face of death, or barb'rous scene,  
What means that pallid cheek and troubled mien?  
Behold him strike in contest with the brave,  
Or, anger'd, give the death-blow to a slave;  
No with'ring pang of dread distorts his brows,      75  
No keen remorse his moveless feature shows.  
Yet, less a villain than his fellows, he  
Hath shrunk from horrors others smil'd to see,  
And still hath shunn'd communion with the horde,  
A guest unfrequent at the festive board.      80  
Not long hath he to mirth and revel ta'en,  
Or joined in social league with fellow men :

In ampler wassail for the time delayed,  
 His guests of late have full reprisal made ;  
 And, for himself, none deeper seem'd to quaff,      60  
 Or jest more gaily, or more loudly laugh.  
 Whate'er it bode, the day's unwonted state  
 Delights his vassals with a chance of prate ;  
 No dame he smiled on, none who graced his side,  
 But some retainer dooms to be his bride ;      70  
 They curse no more his gloom, his pride's forgot,  
 Indiff'rent grown, since it affects them not.

## V

He seeks the window—opens—darkness lowers  
 In bodied terror round his shrouded towers.  
 'Tis but an hour—the silent gloom of night      85  
 Still points to time, and bids us mark his flight :  
 Thought rushes on the soul, despite or pride,  
 Indiff'rence, folly, passion, or its tide ;  
 The mail-clad lord, the soul-enfetter'd slave,  
 He that may claim and he that begs a grave,      100

The wretch of blood, the vot'ry of the bowl,  
Alike must think with him that wears a cowl—  
'Tis but an hour since here the rev'lers stood,  
And now—but who shall say one lies in blood?  
And thou! base-seeming wretch, whate'er thou art, 105  
Perchance with all hell's vices round thy heart,  
Perchance with vulgar terrors only strook,  
Thou shrink'st—but I give credence to thy look.  
Guilty or guiltless,—man or murd'rer named,  
Thou, moved by weakness, or by conscience damn'd, 110  
Lord of unnumber'd serfs and dreaded power,  
Change—grasp—recal—that one—that last—lost  
hour!

Thou can'st not!—never yet could mortal grasp  
Detain one moment, though but for a gasp!  
'Tis gone—thy period of protracted strife, 115  
But not its deeds!—each hour of human life  
Sees them renewed, and ever shall renew,  
Long as there be hearts to scheme and hands to do.

## VI.

Hark ! through the gloom a sound discordant breaks.  
Whose steps approach ? The scared owl screams and  
wakes ;

120

At distance prowling o'er the dreary waste,  
The wolf's long howl is borne upon the blast ;  
While, far remote, from solitary dell  
Is heard the convent's widely booming bell ;  
The sentry's tread in leaden echoes falls,  
Heavy and sullen, from the ancient walls ;  
And mutter'd accents are a moment heard,  
As guard to guard repeats the mystic word.  
Then all is silent ; ev'n the slumb'ring stream  
Forgets to brawl, and murmurs in its dream ;  
Glim'ring and low, the faggot's light decays,  
And gives at each short flash a fainter blaze.  
A step is on the threshold !—lo ! before  
A form—its shade glides slowly o'er the floor ;

125

130

A foot moves noiselessly ; a giant hand  
Shadows the wall, which shows it grasps a brand !

## VII.

“ Ranulph ?—thus soon !—such haste forewarns  
me dread :

“ Thy task undone—Gils Beuth ?”

“ Gils Beuth is dead.”

“ ’Tis well—how died he ?—where ?—and where  
bestowed,

“ Thy hand its burden ?—deep in earth or flood ?

“ But, Ranulph, breath’d he as he struggled aught

“ Like to my name ? some sound thou must have  
caught.”

“ Gils Beuth is dead. If further thou would’st know,

“ Go search, or guess,—thou shrewdly can’st, I trow.”

“ I know thee trusty, Ranulph, prompt, and bold,

“ The grave less secret : but our friendship ’s old,

“ Nor needs recounting—gratitude, thou know’st,

“ Endures the longest where concealed the most.

" The thing is sped, thou say'st? No apter hand  
" Roves arm'd with terror through our border land. 130  
" Thy name but breathed above the cordial bowl,  
" Men drink and choke,—cold shiv'ring to the soul!  
" Aghast the peasant flies, when o'er his path  
" Dim shadows flit—heaven save him from thy wrath.  
" The young look round, old warriors shake their heads, 135  
" Monks pray, and vestals shudder at their beads.  
" Thou com'st in garb of night, with brand and fire,  
" Wild as a midnight tempest in its ire.  
" Dark are thy wand'rings; not an eye beholds  
" Aught which could perpetrate what morn unfolds, 140  
" Hearths ras'd, shrines ransack'd, turrets on the ground,  
" A blasted year, and famine stalking round,  
" Thy crimson footsteps black'ning on the green,  
" And Havoc gloating o'er the bloody scene.  
" Not unprovok'd, thy dark despair could urge 145  
" Its course, remorseless as the sweeping surge.  
" Not thou th' aggressor, and not mine to cast  
" Too close a scrutiny on what has past.

“ No hand more skill'd to execute my deed,  
“ Nor heart more willing—would I held thy creed. 170  
“ What's done is done—but hast thou nought  
    which tends  
“ To fasten the suspicion on his friends ?”

## VIII.

“ Aye, and to prove it too !—’tis but to say  
“ The villain Ranulph cross’d him on his way ;  
“ This were enough : and, seeing all is done, 175  
“ ’Twill be convenient Ranulph should be one.  
“ A baron’s friend !—ha ! ha ! ’twere much to see  
“ The dogs of chase and hunted wolf agree.  
“ Did confirmation of my guilt depend  
“ On proof of this, Gils Beuth were Ranulph’s friend, 180  
“ Despite all contraries ; some cunning priest  
“ Would make his heaven and hell unite at least,  
“ Make Peter’s key assume a turn most civil,  
“ And Michael quaff a bumper to the devil.



- “ Away with subterfuge. His blood I spilt !  
“ Behold this dripping dagger—to the hilt  
“ I plunged it in his heart, and would in thine,  
“ If well assured thine own would not reach mine.  
“ I mask no villany, nor seek to hide  
“ From men my vice, no more than thou thy pride. 190  
“ Thou deem’st me worst of villains. What art thou ?  
“ Thy heart but hides what’s stamp’d upon my brow,  
“ Why should I wear a veil ? I dread no power,  
“ No force can harm me, till my fated hour.  
“ What’s the world’s curse to me?—a pinch were  
    pain, 195  
“ But words !—I scoff at ages of disdain.”  
“ Outlawed—excommunicated—shunn’d—and driv’n  
“ From intercourse with earth, and hope of heaven ;  
“ Contemned — reviled — detested — loathed — and  
    feared,  
“ Forced to the wilds and wastes, with beasts to herd, 200  
“ I found no torture save the lack of food,  
“ And thirst for madd’ning drinks to stir the blood,

- “ Or the rough blast upon the biting wound  
“ They scored upon my back, when racked and bound  
“ By galling priesthood; they my heart estranged 205  
“ From human ties, and dared me be avenged :  
“ The rest was nought—earth’s shame, and loss of  
    heaven,  
“ Waked no such pangs as aching gums had given ;  
“ *They* left me still myself :—’twas Ranulph—I !  
“ All which had left the womb, and had to die. 210  
“ What had I lost ?—in life, in limb, the same ;  
“ Thus was I born :—*they* only took my name.  
“ I’ve earned me now another—he is strange  
“ Who ne’er hath heard of Ranulph and revenge !  
“ Revenge ! I shouted,—wood and cave demand 215  
“ Revenge ! then glittered forth this practised brand,  
“ Which ne’er since then hath known, nor shall, till  
    part  
“ We both at last—sheath, save the human heart.  
“ For suffer’d pangs alone I sought to slake  
“ My thirst of blood, for scourge, and flame, and rack ; 220

- " Thus to be tortured by the things which wore  
" My image, men ! forsooth, no more,  
" Mere fleshly things and mortal ; the same earth  
" Held me and them, supported, and gave birth.  
" And why this torture ? why by dogs and men 225  
" Track'd like a sullen monster to his den ?  
" Wrenched from yon Benedictine dotard's hold,  
" With draughts of goodly wine I made me bold :  
" Where was the wrong ?—'twas consecrated juice,  
" The better suited to a villain's use : 230  
" 'Twas sacred to the altar—precious cheat !  
" Earth bows with all her fools at Cunning's feet ;  
" Men deal by force, but priests in cunning trade,  
" And guile keeps pace in rapine with the blade.  
" A common booty is the victor's right ; 235  
" Earth is a battle field, and life a fight.  
" I seized but on my own ;—'tis power accords  
" The right to all things—power which gives us lords :  
" What gave them right to punish but the power ?  
" What made me criminal ? My adverse hour. 240

" They called it crime, I weakness ; nought is crime

" In power supreme, nor dare be, through all time.

" I wronged them not ; but man's envenomed spite

" Must ooze from out its slime—the snake will bite.

" There is a lurking fiend in every breast, 245

" Which makes all mortal misery its jest.

" My misery was their sport ; and I have made

" Their misery my sport with this red blade.

" They might have spared : no demon grasped the hand

" And made it strike ; then why not spare the brand ? 250

" This bade me seek revenge : there 's not an eye

" This hour unclosed which mocked my agony.

" I war with all my kind, would slay the fools

" Who work my will, but yet have need of tools.

" I've had revenge ; but not enough to sate 255

" My deep-worn ire, my fierce and unquenched hate :

" Shrill through the midnight, hark ! a fearful cry,

" Crackles the ruin, flash the flames on high,

" The choir's low chant becomes a dismal yell,

" Long, loud, and wild, it bursts from every cell, 260

“ And rushing through the flames, distracted, bare,  
“ Weak woman comes—my best of pleasure there :  
“ And bald old monks, as prone to such fair toys  
“ As I, or thou, or young ungoverned boys.  
“ Then flash our gleaming weapons ; what shall guard 26  
“ Those shining skulls—what hypocrite be spared ?  
“ Hell for the monks ! I would there were a hell,  
“ To snatch them to its tortures as they fell ;  
“ Such as their mercy dooms my future state,  
“ Wild as my fury, burning as my hate. 270  
“ I jest at punishment which comes too late.  
“ The worst I fear is loss of present life,  
“ And power to slay ;—my only heaven the strife,  
“ And this warm sense of being, thus to breathe—  
“ To drink long draughts—to sleep—to wreath 275  
“ My arms round beauty—to let loose all will—  
“ To give desire its glut—to spurn and kill.  
“ What boots thy tale of friendship, dost thou deem  
“ My folly such I think men what they seem ?

- " Lay not this half-faced cunning to my guilt; 180  
" An outlaw!—murderer!—devil!—what thou wilt,  
" But not a whited villain—friend! no, no :  
" 'Twas int'rest leagued us 'gainst a common foe.  
" Int'rest cements all bonds, all bonds destroys,  
" Sways every thought, and every act employs. 255  
" Friendship! I babble nonsense; let me end.  
" Baron! thy this night's victim was thy friend!"

## IX.

Here ceased the wretch. The feeble gleam displayed  
His hideous aspect and gigantic shade.  
Fierce rolled his gloating eye, and darkly wild 290  
He glared around, and like a demon smiled;  
And from his strange and with'ring smile there fell  
A light, appalling as a glimpse of hell.  
Swoln were his bloated features, black, and tense  
With each disgusting appetite of sense. 295  
His face and form accord; behold in each  
The brutal monster pictured in his speech.

Savage his garb, unshapely, shagg'd, and rude,  
Stripped from some gentler terror of the wood.  
His waist was girded by a leathern belt ; 200  
His feet with sandals bound, his legs with pelt ;  
His girdle held a knife ; and in his hand  
Was firmly grasped his crimson-spotted brand.  
That weapon of his hate which seemed imbued,  
Like him it served, with thirst of human blood. 305  
In form of handle wrought, the blade now bore  
The collar which his neck in bondage wore.  
An instrument of vengeance. He that wrote  
Its bitter words his fury quickly smote.  
When like a tiger from his chains he strode 310  
To lawless freedom, through his keeper's blood,  
Then burst the sluices of the foulest breast  
That ere foul thoughts in fouler acts expressed ;  
Like a roused snake unfolding all its length,  
He darted death around with fatal strength. 315  
As sweeps the torrent's mad resistless force,  
Long pent and curbed, he rolled his reckless course.

Rocks roll—woods float—the mountain's hollow side  
Shakes o'er the stream, and tumbles in the tide ;  
Nor bound, nor check, nor milder course he shows, 32.  
Nor knows remorse, alas ! nor mercy knows.

## X.

In those dark ages, known through after times  
As learning's night, all ignorance and crimes,  
Each will was law, where will was linked with power,  
And blood flowed free, to while the tedious hour. 33.  
Tyrannic chiefs held sway, and, in degree  
As each oppressed, each brutal lord was free ;  
War all their business, high and stern they stood  
Alone, and guarded round by seas of blood.  
Contrasted evils from the system sprung : 33.  
Guilt played the judge and innocence was hung ;  
Despotic monarchs brooked their nobles' gibes,  
Tricked their own statutes, and accepted bribes,  
Or, seized with sudden whim, in sportive mood  
Wasted the lands they fertilized with blood. 335



Then social strife made civil union strong,  
And private rectitude was public wrong,  
And crime was sacred, guilt awoke no shame,  
And superstition took religion's name.

## XI.

Maimed by oppression in each better part, 340  
Sensual by nature, brutalized by art,  
Savage and sullen, grov'ling as the earth,  
He trod in slav'ry from his hour of birth—  
The abject peasant clank'd his galling chain,  
And found in crime a recompence for pain. 345  
All fearful vices of that barb'rous age  
Could ease his labours, and his pains assuage ;  
Revengeful, selfish (vices of the heart  
Which knows no kin, but ever broods apart),  
Prowling and daring, ignorant of law, 350  
What recked he for the bounds he never saw ?  
Or what had recked all human ties beheld ?  
His arm ne'er spared but where its force was quelled.

The dark effect accorded with the cause—  
He found no justice, recognized no laws. 33  
Driven like a surly beast from stall to field,  
The goaded serf toiled on, by custom steeled.  
Spurned by his lord, as fellow to the brute,  
The mastiff licked, or snarled, or bit the foot,  
As strength or daring prompted—he but knew 34  
Such bonds as those his tyrants on him threw ;  
And wilder, fiercer, from his spirit broke  
The smothered flame, when once escaped the yoke.  
Earth was to him as our first parents known ;  
What yielded to his grasp became his own : 35  
And in the deep recesses of a breast  
So wholly lost, degraded, and oppressed,  
What marvel such an evil spirit grew  
As jars with nature, when thus shown to view ?

## XII.

Foremost of such a herd, to danger's brunt 36  
The most opposed, was Ranulph's daring front.

Brought forth in bondage, with his infant throat  
He lisped out curses on the hand which smote.  
Fierce from the cradle, heir to more than all  
The venom'd hatred cherished by each thrall, 275  
He sought for evil like a fiend of night,  
And not from thwarted passion, but delight.  
Where others shrunk appalled, with guilty soul,  
Onward he rushed, his starting-place their goal.  
The heart's emotion by his fellows shown 340  
Inspired his wonder, or contempt alone :  
He deemed them hypocrites, or cowards, fools,  
The food of avarice, ambition's tools ;  
And not the sufferings of a saint could melt  
His iron heart, for pains by him unfelt. 365

## XIII.

Thus led to ill by choice, a villain born,  
Ere yet impelled attracted, almost borne  
Perforce, to crime, his innate hardihood,  
Obdurate, callous as the frozen flood,

Bre winds have loosened fettered nature's chain, 275  
And sent the deluge sweeping o'er the plain,  
Then when rewarded with his well-earned meed  
(The stern requital of his impious deed),  
From his wild soul the latent madness came,  
Fierce with imagined wrong, unchecked by shame. 285  
What savage nature and more barb'rous art  
Had left untainted in his vicious heart  
Conspiring circumstances drenched in crimes,  
And made a monster worthy of the times.

## XIV.

Chased from the world, beneath that fearful ban 400  
Mankind his foes, he grew the foe of man ;  
His wolvis nature preyed in human folds,  
And lurked in caves, and roamed the wilds and wolds,  
His deeds scarce sadder than the life he led ;  
The rock his safety, and the marsh his bed. 405  
If in his bosom bloomed that spot uncursed  
With which kind nature still redeems her worst

(Like life within the stubborn granite found,  
Or light from gems deep hidden under ground),  
Such sentence, black'ning all, had made depart 410  
The last faint virtue of his evil heart.

## XV.

Skilled in the part he chose, in time he grew  
A common dread, and could in turn pursue.  
Success brought friends, and numbers, warped to ill,  
Besought protection of his better skill. 415  
'Twas given. A weapon which the thoughtless hand  
Grasps on the edge must yield, not claim command.  
To work his will, his hateful cunning learned  
To seize the part which gentler tyrants spurned—  
Hatred, revenge, base crime, and meaner vice, 420  
With him found refuge, and obtained their price.  
With these he wrought. His aim and theirs was one;  
He sped their purpose, and achieved his own;  
And, snatching what his fate could not withhold,  
In lust and rapine revelled uncontrolled. 425

## XVI.

Such the dark outline of a being, made  
To outrage e'en the furious part he played.  
And thus may ignorance, with oppression joined,  
Blacken, debase, and quench the human mind.

## XVII.

High on the dais of that old Gothic hall, 420  
Late full of life and boist'rous festival,  
With downcast look, and bending as in grief,  
Against a column stood the lofty chief.  
His marble brow and full expanded breast  
Betrayed too well the tortured soul's unrest. 425  
And his blank vision, turning long within,  
Told of remorse deep brooding over sin.

## XVIII.

The timid light, which feared to look upon  
A deed so dark, returned, returned now all was done.

Black clouds fled hurriedly athwart the sky ; 440  
And now the moon's pale crescent gleamed on high,  
So sadly sweet, so mournfully serene,  
She seemed to sorrow o'er the silent scene,  
Shedding a light as lovely, through that room,  
As woman's smile on man's deep hour of gloom. 445  
Oh ! it was sweet at such a dreary time  
To gaze on aught so pure, so free from crime.  
So tranquilly it shone, so calm, so fair,  
Could this be earth ? could guilt be brooding there ?  
Bright, evanescent, like the bliss we chase 450  
Still leading on through life an endless race,  
Sudden it shone, and must be clouded soon ;  
For scant the blue which circles round the moon.  
Fast fly the clouds, while clouds as fast pursue,  
Striving like men each other to undo. 455  
Inexplicable world ! in every scene  
Some type of evil or of good is seen ;  
All objects have a language for the heart,  
The eloquence of nature void of art,

Which all must feel. That chieftain turned and raised 440  
His glance to heaven, and for a moment gazed.  
He felt—the sufferings he would not reveal  
Were seen in each vain effort to conceal.  
How pale that lofty brow, so pale the moon  
Seemed not so white as that on which she shone; 460  
But well was curbed the strife within his form,  
And outward calm betrayed the inward storm.

## XIX.

But, evil as he was, his look expressed  
Much that man's rigid heart could not detest,  
And woman's gentle nature would reprove, 470  
And then forgive—nay, pity—weep—and love.  
Oh! there is one, so pure, so bright, she seems  
Bright as the beings in her own pure dreams—  
Stray spirit of a light and starry world,  
So far from this the shining sphere is whirld 480  
Round other suns—and she, the young, the fair,  
Is one to whom the brow of paleness there,



And stately form, and locks of sable hue,  
Which darker with contrasted whiteness grew,  
And sparks of soul from that quick haughty eye, 430  
Which could to hers, with look as mild, reply—  
Were earth, and heaven, and light, and life, and bliss,  
Her soul, her all, to be was to be his.  
And she could love him—many a sunny hour  
They chased with smiles from Ada's happy bower; 435  
And many a lovely night, when bright above  
Chaste Dian shone, their eyes conversed of love.  
And still she loves—Oh! could she break her vow?  
And can she—will she—does she love him now?  
He fixed his wild and earnest look on high, 440  
As if he deemed that orb would deign reply,  
Which once had known him guiltless—on her course  
Now the mute witness of his soul's remorse.  
Whate'er his suff'rings, word nor sign betrayed  
To brutal scorn the pangs himself had made; 445  
But all was hushed, and pale, and cold, and calm,  
The workings of a heart which utterance gives no balm.

## XX.

Heaven's vault grew black ; the widely gathering  
gloom

Diffused a gradual horror through the room ;  
The stern old warriors from the walls looked down, 400  
And seemed to menace with a fiercer frown ;  
All sounds were hushed—so still, the thought of  
sound

Startled like echo. Sunk in thought profound  
Was he, who wrestling with the lot of all  
Bore nature's agony with nature's fall, 500  
Who born in happier times had left a name  
Perchance unstained by guilt, unmarked by shame.  
With such a deadly caution as the snake  
Glides to the slumb'ring prey it would not wake,  
Had Ranulph moved his hideous bulk, and stood 510  
Again prepared to plunge in human blood.  
The hand was raised, and firm the weapon clasped ;  
Firm was the purpose, firm the nerve which grasped.

Still struggling o'er the floor the moonbeam threw,  
Through the red pane, a light of crimson hue, 515  
And there was traced the same appalling brand,  
Clenched with a giant's force, in that dark hand.  
One moment—now!—he lingers not to note  
More surely through the gloom a fatal spot.  
Glare on his prey, like basilisk's, his eyes. 520  
Vengeful he strikes—the shivered weapon flies.  
Scattered and sounding through the startled night,  
And the struck pillar flashed a train of light.

## XXI.

With that facility which marks a mind  
Prompt in extremes, above the vulgar kind, 525  
While yet his thought was wandering on a theme  
So real reality seemed more a dream,  
De Vallibus had watched the moving shade,  
Sprung from the danger, grasped and drawn his blade;  
And, ere the clang of shattered fragments ceased, 530  
His falchion glittered at the robber's breast.

“ But that ’twere insult offered to my sword,  
“ Thy worst heart’s blood by this its length had gored.  
“ Hence ! breathing pestilence, thou thing whose breath  
“ Breeds plague and famine, wasting fire, and death. 535  
“ Hence ! lest subduing all disgust I find,  
“ In my changed heart, some mercy for mankind,  
“ And make atonement for the blood that’s shed,  
“ By vengeance taken on thy guilty head.  
“ Oh ! had I ever loathed thee and thy trade 540  
“ As now I loathe, that wreck had ne’er been made.  
“ Haste ! go ! begone ! or by the warm life spilt,  
“ Whose gushing made me one with thee in guilt,  
“ And made me monstrous as thyself, one blow  
“ Shall show thee what thy soul must shrink to know.” 545  
Thus spoke the chieftain, and with ready hand  
From the dull embers seized a glowing brand.  
The outlaw moved not. Baffled of his prey,  
And hunted down, he grimly stood at bay ;  
Then turning, while his lips with curses glowed, 550  
He left the hall, and through the gall’ry strode.

"I choose not mine own hour ; let others' hate

"Strike when it *must* the blow which is my fate.

"I seek it not. My day shall have its date."

Thus muttering, he retired ; the baron's sword 555

Pursued, prepared to strike, or guard its lord.

A secret way received the guilty pair ;

Cool through the opened portal came the air ;

The greater villain plunged into the wood ;

Wrapped in deep thought the other ling'ring stood ; 560

And, as along the mountains far away 1

The light before it sent its shadow gray ;

He turned within, nor could again behold

Dawn of that day which should such scene unfold.

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## CANTO II.

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### I.

THE chase is o'er, the stately hart lies low,  
And far in silence weeps the widow'd doe ;  
Loudly and long triumphant bugles ring,  
Hills call to hills, and woods to valleys sing ;  
The merry huntsmen, clad in sylvan garb,  
Wind up the glade, and each on wearied barb ;  
All glorious to the west, declining day  
Effulgent rolls the tide of light away ;  
The flood of radiance on all nature breaks,  
On streams and mountains, towers and craggy peaks,  
Gilds the brown forests, beautifies the waste,  
Tints the gray rock, and lingers there the last.  
Thrice happy man, for whom all beauties shine  
Attun'd in mystic harmony divine,

Whose kindling spirit with externals finds 15  
Perfected concord in harmonious minds !  
The filmy cloud which floats in azure space,  
Pure as a spirit, with a spirit's grace,  
The varying blush of eve, the mountain's glow,  
The long perspective sweetly spread below, 20  
The songs of vocal groves, the peace which flows  
From sounds of falling waves and whisp'ring boughs,  
Soft as the notes which murm'ring caves prolong  
When gentle gales sigh forth their evening song—  
These touch the soul. Responsive to the hand, 25  
Joy o'er its chords extends her magic wand ;  
To Nature's hand responsive, she alone  
Thrills with a charm peculiarly her own,  
Whose hand with chords melodious fill'd the breast,  
She best can sound them, for she knows them best. 30  
Is there whose harsh unorganized mind  
Acts but in discords ? Such, alas ! we find :  
From earth's primordial, to the now which is,  
The crimes of man have cancell'd half his bliss.

## II.

The chase is o'er, the stately hart lies low, 35  
And homeward turn'd the weary hunters go.  
They stop! What quarry opens on their view?  
What means that cry? Oh! not the loud halloo!  
But shrill and wild, from mountain cave to cave,  
Black Horror shouts, and shakes the stern and brave : 40  
Slow issuing from a fearful gorge, they bore  
Two mangled corpses, lost in wounds and gore.  
In rude chamois, despoil'd of every grace,  
They knew their best companion in the chase,  
Gils Beuth, whose skill and courage in the field 45  
Left age behind, and taught the bold to yield.  
Close by his side his faithful squire they found,  
Stripp'd of attire, and gash'd with many a wound.  
Fast flew the tale, and soon an armed train  
Mix'd with the group, the vassals of the slain. 50  
They came, all burning for revenge, prepar'd,  
For that wild draught, to leave no deed undar'd,



Each madd'ning heart to double fierceness wrought  
Thus to behold the chieftain whom they sought,  
He ! the bright hope of an illustrious race, 55  
Their youthful leader through the fight and chase,  
Whose glowing ardour in the hour of strife  
Scorn'd nature's bounds, disdaining thoughts of life,  
And made age young, while warriors stood amaz'd,  
And young hearts leap'd to manhood as they gaz'd ; 60  
Nor dreaded more than lov'd, for he had won  
The common mind by feats of valour done,  
And the frank bearing of an open soul  
Had gain'd him those who seldom brook'd control :  
And well to-day's unwonted stir has shown 65  
Who wrought his death have cause to dread their own.

## III.

And whose the crime? Unknown that fearful vale.  
But those around had told full many a tale ;  
Of horrid import, deeds of that wild hand,  
The outlaw'd serf, and his night-scaring band. 70

Him they denounce ; no proofs are needed there—  
The foe too hated and revenge too dear.  
Enough to know, in that detested glen,  
The robber's haunt, perchance his secret den,  
Was found their murder'd lord. A trail of blood 75  
Led to the spot where gush'd in one full flood  
The warm life from his breast. Around them lay  
The signs of desp'rate, but unequal fray.  
From thence a wintry torrent's craggy bed  
To beaten paths and op'ner country led ; 80  
And, it would seem, his steps had been beguil'd,  
By that-rude track, too far into the wild.  
The steeds away, the arms and vesture gone,  
Alone betray'd what hands the deed had done.  
High heav'd each burning breast, and words of flame 85  
Burst wildly forth, all utt'ring Ranulph's name.

## IV.

With this day's dawn, quick must'ring in his hall,  
His ready serfs obeyed the warder's call.

To-day must ransack earth and flood—nay, air  
They fain would range, in wildness of despair. 10  
Three days have fled since with a single page  
He rode for Naworth, there to claim his gage,  
In faith of knighthood pledged to brave the best  
At joust, or tournay, solemn fete, or feast,  
Though rightful heir to Naworth's towers and lands, 15  
(Held by his sires while yet from Norman strands  
The bastard tyrant looked across the waves  
For satrap glory in the bows of alaves.)  
Foe to De Vallibus, he scorn'd to know  
His rival darker than the generous foe, 20  
And joyous sprung to horse, and saw advance  
The knights in arms, and burn'd to prove his lance

## V.

From Naworth back last night return'd the few  
Without their lord, nor much of him they knew.  
The night whose morn gleam'd brightly on his crest, 25  
As, proudly daring, to the charge he prest,

With lords, and knights, and squires, a goodly  
train,

Beheld him homewards guide his charger's rein.

Diverging soon, his page and he pursued

A lonelier way, high overhung with wood, 110

Whose devious windings guided to where high

On beetling crags his turrets brav'd the sky.

A mail he wore whose firmly-plated rows

Slight vantage yielded to outnumb'ring foes.

Elate with wine, and pleased with triumphs won, 115

He bade good night, and gaily hasted on.

This from his last companions on the way,

Whose high avouch 'twere insult to gainsay,

His friends had learn'd. They eager search'd in  
vain

The pathway leading to his wide domain; 120

But though with more than duty's zeal they sought,

And numbers labour'd not by duty brought,

Tidings nor trace of absent lord or page

Made glad the wailings of maternal age.

Fresh ways they range, the old again explore, 125  
Again they hope, despairing as before,  
Till fond Expectance dies and Hope can cheer no more.

## VI.

They come ! they come ! Far sounding through  
the vale

Is heard the wild death-note, the long and dismal wail.  
Mournful and slow, with melancholy tread, 130  
Their arms across form litters for the dead.  
The rugged pathway's steep and dang'rous track  
Shows stains whose crimson time has chang'd to black,  
Save where, descending from yon sunny hill,  
Bright as a sunbeam leaps the shining rill, 135  
And stains its breast, and flies away from light,  
Like a fall'n angel seeking gloom and night—  
Like the revenger's sword, whose fearful gleam  
All redly shines in evening's setting beam,  
Or Mercy, sent from heaven to weep away 140  
The guilty drops she vainly tried to stay.

## VII.

Dreamlike reality ! too real dream !  
Oh sudden death ! As in a gliding stream  
Heaven's lights reflected shine—the living ray  
Fancy makes dwelling there, though far away, 141  
So turn we to the lately dead, nor own  
At once the truth, nor can believe them gone,  
Nor will alone behold the clay-cold form,  
But turn to Memory's glass, where all with life is  
warm.

## VIII.

On Beuth's high walls fair shine the mid-day  
beams, 142  
Fair the blue heavens, and fair the glassy streams.  
In Beuth's high halls is seen the hue of night,  
Dark forms glide slowly, hearts grow sick with light ;  
And one is there to whose dim grieving eye  
No suns have light, no blue is in the sky. 143

To whom no change, no morn, no night returns,  
No hope, no dread, but one long thought which  
                  mourns,

And ever mourns, though suns shine ne'er so gay,  
And asks her weeping maids when comes the linger-  
                  ing-day.

Her silver hair, and deeply-furrowing tears,                   160  
Bespeak her woman, too, too many years ;  
A widow'd matron, childless mother, one  
Whose house is in the dust, her last, her best is gone.

## IX.

Far amid hills there is an old gray stone  
Which in the desert-silence stands alone,                   165  
Left to its solitude, with not an eye  
To view it, save the cold moon in the sky,  
Lone as a ruin'd heart whose hopes have fled,  
Watching in silent sorrow o'er the dead ;  
And ever there sad music sounds at night,                   170  
No forms are seen, but in the dim cold light

A brown mist wraps the stone, and dew-drops twin-  
kle bright.

It could not be that sorrow had brought hither  
The minstrel old, who wander'd none knew  
whither,

When but to die was left him. Time, the foe 176  
Of happier hearts, is kind to suffering woe ;  
And his can never be the strain thus thrown  
To the night winds, though much 'tis like his  
own.

"The hearth is cold ; the hall is desolate ;

"No voice, no step ; unguarded is the gate ; 180

"Grass fills each crevice of the marble floor ;

"Bleak wintry winds rush by the jarring door ;

"The tap'stry rustles on the wall ; the cry

"Of horrid night-birds, screaming fearfully,

"Frights the lean fox, as, famishing and keen, 185

"From chambers high he glares upon the scene ;

"No serf, no guest, no lord—unenvied now

"The honours circling round his youthful brow ;



" Pure as a vestal 'mid conventual gloom,  
" The moonbeam rests upon his marble tomb." 190

## X.

It was the time when gentle twilight strews  
The hill with gems and steeps the vale in dew ;  
The lake below was seen to shine no more,  
But veil'd in mists it rippled to the shore ;  
From Beauty's bower came Music's sweetest strain, 195  
In tones so soft, so sad, so mix'd with pain,  
As if some wand'ring spirit from above  
Woo'd in that calm retreat an earthly love,  
And in celestial accents taught to flow  
A heavenly passion touch'd with earthly woe. 200  
Oh ! 'twas a melody so softly, deep,  
The saddened soul in luxury could weep,  
And pour itself in ecstasy, and be  
A part of that entrancing melody.  
Such the sweet sounds whose cadence died away 205  
In change all lovely as declining day,

And charm'd the ear of him who glided by,  
O'er the smooth lake, like music of the sky,  
Or, when beneath the tall and cavern'd cliff  
He lonely steer'd his lightly-moving skiff, 210  
It seem'd the rocks that fairy music made :  
Fearful he fled, and charm'd he yet delay'd.

## XI.

As falls and rises Ocean's azure breast,  
When only inward sorrows break her rest,  
In gentle undulation, slow and long, 215  
Wave blends with wave, then sinks amid the throng,  
Absorbing and absorb'd, each melts and dies  
Like summer clouds in bright Ausonian skies,  
So mov'd the notes whose ceaseless changes grew,  
To ears a spell, as ocean to the view, 220  
Still reaching higher sweetness as they rose  
And gath'ring deeper pathos at each close,  
Till dying off in low and plaintive wail,  
More sweet than song of dove or nightingale,

Or Memmon's airy harpings to the day, 225  
The last soft strain in music pass'd away—  
Like the last wave which heaves upon the shore  
When the sunk pebble moves the stream no more.

## XII.

The voice was mute ; the music ceas'd to sound.  
The heav'ns were still ; 'twas stillness all around. 230  
The silent night-dew Beauty's flowers was steeping ;  
The zephyrs slept ; the happy lake lay sleeping.  
Calm was the mountain ; quiet was the vale ;  
Hush'd were the woods ; and Echo told no tale.  
Sweet Peace sat list'ning in her lone alcove, 235  
And gaz'd and mus'd, her ev'ry musing love.  
List'ning, she seem'd the breathless calm to hear,  
Or sounds so faint they reach'd no ruder ear,  
Of warbling brooks from distant hills convey'd,  
Of dew-drops pattering in the leafy shade, 240  
Or mildly dripping from the bush which weeps  
And crisps the lake from yonder jutting steeps,

Of murmurs heard from speaking crags to flow,  
When eagles sent the loos'ned rock below,  
Of waters trickling from the oar at rest, 245  
Of fern-bush rustling round the wild deer's breast,  
The wav'ring fall of leaf long sear and dead  
Torn by a breath, when storm and blast had fled,  
And solemn tones from rude o'er-arching cave,  
As plunged some sportive dweller of the wave. 250

## XIII.

Array'd in beauty, sate within her bower  
The young enchantress of the pleasing hour,  
Lovely as that half-heav'nly form whose eyes  
First smil'd at light in holy paradise.  
Oh! who could look on Ada's eyes of blue, 255  
Nor think of heav'n, from whence their light they drew?  
Oh! who could gaze upon the bright blue skies,  
Nor turn once more to look on Ada's eyes?  
He who at eve, with kindling spirit, far  
Through azure fields roves on from star to star, 260

Whose fancy sees the seraph beings there,  
Alone can picture one like Ada fair.  
Oh ! not in earth below nor heaven above  
Seem'd aught more form'd to be belov'd and love.  
Fond Fancy's idol, Nature's sweetest child, 265  
Her own lov'd spotless lily of the wild ;  
Pure as young Innocence, whose vision greets  
With heav'nly light each gentle flower it meets ;  
A soul, alas ! so buoyant in its gladness,  
One trifling sorrow could o'erwhelm with sadness. 270  
With head upon her bended arm declining,  
With fond blue eye in dewy moisture shining,  
She gaz'd upon her lover-chief, who sate  
With folded arms, and looks disconsolate.  
Thoughtful he seem'd, and gath'ring o'er his brow 275  
Rose marks of feeling, deep'ning into woe ;  
And as she gaz'd the pearly drops which hung  
Beneath each silken lash more faintly clung,  
And, trembling, like two silver stars they fell,  
And told the tale such meteors ever tell. 280

They fell unheeded. In her hand she took  
Her harp once more, and joy illum'd her look,  
And o'er its chords her fairy hand was flung,  
As thus in happier strains her simply lay she sung :—

## 1

“ The lady look'd from her highest tower,                    255  
“ And she look'd on the red sunset ;  
“ And the lady wends to her lonely bower, 2  
“ And her eye with the tear is wet.

## 2

“ The lady look'd from her tower again.  
“ ‘ They come ! and the victor is safe ;                    290  
“ ‘ For I hear the notes of triumph plain,  
“ ‘ And he waves my own white scarf.’

## 3

“ And his minstrels play, and his gates are wide,  
“ And his heart beats glad in his breast,

“ And he clasps in his arms his own young bride; 295

“ May she never have sadder rest.”

#### XIV.

And Ada turns to meet her lover's smile.

Unmov'd, and clouded, he had sat the while ;

And not a word, or look, or whisper'd tone

Of his assures her he is still her own : 300

And scarce forbears he—why she cannot tell—

To half avert the face she loves so well.

She kneels before him, and her glance is rais'd

To meet his own, as thoughtful down it gaz'd ;

And o'er his brows her snowy fingers play, 305

Like sunbeams chasing darkest clouds away.

What ! still no smile ! Oh ! thou some grief hast  
got,

Too long conceal'd, since Ada knows it not ;

But I must know it. Dar'st thou to refuse ?

Thou shalt not—come, thy own, thy Ada, sues. 310

## XV.

In vain. Whate'er his gloominess of heart,  
It haunts him still, nor will again depart.  
She rose, one moment viewed him as he sate—  
She could no more—her heart was desolate.  
Fast beat that heart, and quicker mov'd that  
breast, 315  
Nor heeded more whose much-lov'd hands  
caress'd ;  
But in her robes she hid her deep distress,  
And sobb'd aloud her bosom's bitterness.

## XVII.

“ Ada ! my own lov'd Ada ! ” But her grief  
Flows uncontroll'd, nor will admit relief ; 316  
And fades to paleness now the rosy hue  
Which late o'er face and heaving bosom flew ;  
And o'er her bends, with anguish on his brow,  
The gloomy chief, her anxious lover now.



" My love ! my Ada ! dearest ! Oh forgive 315

" The sullen gloom which thus could make thee  
grieve !

" So much these bold marauders have perplex'd

" My hours of late, my harass'd thought was vex'd ;

" And, brooding how to rid me of the pest,

" I scarce remember'd I was Ada's guest. 320

" Oh, speak ! I would thy tongue had learn'd to  
chide,

" That I might sit in penance by thy side.

" Nay, cease to weep. My soul's solicitude

" Would make atonement for an act so rude.

" Thou know'st, my love, how prone I yet have  
been 325

" To hear the sadder voice of ev'ry scene.

" Full oft thy playful fondness hath beguil'd

" Thoughts dark as these, till grief in mirth has  
smil'd ;

" And thou hast said, when such my gloom of yore,

" My melancholy made thee love me more. 330

“ My heart like some dark rock hath stood alone ;  
“ Thou, the pale flower beneath its shadow grown,  
“ The only verdure on a spot so bare,  
“ But, oh ! how lov’d by him who finds thee there !  
“ ’Tis strange such tender purity should cling 345  
“ To the drear rock which chills each hardier thing.  
“ Oh smile ! it were the darkest of my doom  
“ To blast thy fair young beauties with my gloom.”  
He raised her drooping form. Their mutual glance  
Is beaming gladness in its happy trance. 350  
Away, away, dark world of fears and cares,  
Nor mar the one blest moment which is theirs.

## XVIII.

And Ada smiles again, like some bright stream  
When fled the cloud which had obscur’d the beam.  
“ Nay, blame me not. I saw such shadows sweep 355  
“ Across thy brow I could not choose but weep ;  
“ And much I strove to soothe, but all in vain ;  
“ It would not be—thy sadness came again.

“ And then I thought—in sooth a simple thought,  
“ ’Twas Fancy’s dream—that thou didst love me not. 36  
“ But thou dost love me’ I could never live  
“ Didst thou not love me.—Silly ’twas to grieve.  
“ But, oh ! such care seem’d gather’d on thy brow,  
“ I knew not then—’twas strange—I wonder now.  
“ More sorrow than their wont thy features wore, 36.5  
“ And looks I had not learn’d as thine before ;  
“ And then I deem’d thee angry : but I know  
“ ’Twas not with me, for thou hast told me so.  
“ But we are happy now. Doubt not thy hand  
“ Shall soon disperse the daring outlaw’s band ; 37  
“ And soon in triumph shall my conqu’ror come,  
“ And captive bring their fetter’d leader home ;  
“ And I will sit upon my turret’s height  
“ The live-long day, to see thee come at night ;  
“ And vengeance shall to thee and Heaven be giv’n 37.5  
“ On him—the excommunicate of heaven,  
“ Accurs’d, who slew—but why that sudden start ?  
“ So much thou dost abhor him in thy heart—

“ Who slew thy guest—nay more, thy friend ap-  
prov'd ;

“ For still the brave are by the brave belov'd.” 380

## XIX.

The hour has come, the lady Ada gone ;  
And darkly stands De Vallibus alone.

“ Thus then it is. Just retribution strikes

“ With ev'ry sense, till the soul loathes, dislikes,

“ The sense which feeds it. Let me see or hear, 385

“ Taste, smell, or feel, I have an added fear,

“ Which, work'd by curs'd reflection's magic  
hand,

“ Stings me to madness. Oh for some far land

“ Where I might learn to view earth, ocean, sky,

“ With spirit calm as martyrs when they die ! 390

“ I have made fearful barter. Day by day,

“ With shrinking tide, my spirit ebbs away.

“ Oh guilt ! if fav'rites win of thee a balm,

“ Bestow it now—I sicken with this calm.

- “ To eat—to sleep—to die—to number time 395  
“ By counted miseries and deeds of crime,  
“ To fill the intermediate of each act  
“ With thought for ever changing to distract—  
“ Is this to live? The fair created earth  
“ Is chang’d; and this some foul abortive birth 400  
“ Of Nature, on whose travail Murder glar’d  
“ With bloodshot eye, and gleaming weapon bar’d.  
“ ’Twas wisely ponder’d while my yet pure thought,  
“ Like day’s bright orb, was guiltless of a spot.  
“ ’Twas ponder’d well while yet my happy eye 405  
“ Was rais’d with fond enquiry to the sky,  
“ And unabash’d could view each islet star  
“ Smile down its trembling lustre from afar.  
“ Oh! it was wisely ponder’d when involv’d  
“ In guilt, my shudd’ring breast resolv’d 410  
“ To be the anxious, hopeless thing I am;  
“ ’Twas wise to think ere thus, thus, deeply damn.  
“ But I have thought, irrevocably thought;  
“ And grav’d in act each horrid dream is wrought.

- " Remorse unmans me. Once the arrow sped, 415  
" Why jar the useless string from which it fled ?  
" Not thus the sluggish souls of those my pride  
" Still bade me shun, would bow them to the tide ;  
" Their duller apprehension gives no sense  
" Like mine endurance. 'Tis their mind's defence. 420  
" Weak fancies all—imagination void.  
" I start at shadows. What's the thing destroy'd ?  
" It is not here, nor there. 'Tis nothing. Dreams  
" Have more of substance. Why thus madly teems  
" The brain with its own monsters ? Could he break 425  
" The cearments of the tomb, I well might shake.  
" I have outdone stern justice in my zeal  
" To lash my crimes and make the spirit feel.  
" My rigid penance, long in secret done,  
" Might well for things of darker dye atone ; 430  
" And largess to those holy houses given  
" Shall sure assuage the fearful wrath of Heaven.  
" In battle's wildest broil I have imbrued,  
" Free from remorse, my hands in hostile blood ;

- “ And shall I tremble thus because my foe 485  
“ Falls by a robber’s hand—not mine the blow?  
“ Fool that I am, by coward conscience foil’d;  
“ To-morrow must that hunted brute be toil’d.  
“ Then shall my long-unfed ambition sate  
“ Its gust in safety, and make mock at fate. 490  
“ And he who like War’s demon-form hath stood,  
“ The loathed terror of each zealous feud,  
“ No more shall trip my measures. His blood spilt  
“ Will half absolve my bosom of its guilt.  
“ I had not then restrain’d my angry blade, 495  
“ When parting last, but fear’d to be betray’d.  
“ Like one long struggling with a foaming stream,  
“ Now holds the trunk, and now the floating beam.  
“ Each sinks, grasp’d singly; and his fainting grasp  
“ No more combines them with sufficient clasp. 500  
“ Thus Ranulph plunges on from hold to hold.  
“ Confed’rate foes on ev’ry side enfold  
“ His lurking band; and now must fall the slave  
“ Whom int’rest’s self too much abhors to save.

- " Then am I safe, unless this craven dread      465  
" With hateful necromancy rouse the dead,  
" To throw a damning, black'ning mark of shame  
" Upon the fair escutcheon of my fame.  
" Oh fear will yet betray me? I grow strange  
" E'en to myself; and men must note the change. 466  
" My dreams are horrible; despair my mood  
" In peopled halls and dreadful solitude.  
" Oh! how the agonizing drops have gush'd  
" O'er my pale brow when on my musings hush'd  
" Some one hath chanced! My guilty soul seems  
    caught      467  
" Amid her crimes, and thinks they see each thought.  
" How have I started when my mind absorb'd  
" In its dark depths like ocean was perturb'd  
" To hear th' unbidden mutt'ring tongue unfold  
" That tale the heart believ'd it yet could hold,      468  
" And in my wildness scarce have deem'd the  
    tone  
" An earthly voice! Oh God! it was my own.



" And thou too, Ada ! Once to hear, to see

" Thee, was my joy, but now is misery.

" Thou more than all hast stung me, dash'd to  
earth

475

" The hopes, though ling'ring long, of little worth.

" There is a strange perversion of the sight

" Which sees what is not. I have look'd to-night

" On visions fraudulent, but of such dye

" As would make night in heaven. Before my eye, 480

" In sums of ill-accumulated deeds,

" My life came back. Again my victim bleeds.

" Each circumstance, appearance, movement, sound,

" Of the dire act came threat'ningly around.

" I saw it not when done ; but, strangely wrought, 485

" All black particulars in embodied thought

" Frighted my soul ; and that most horrid scene

" Would still obtrude my sight and her between.

" I look'd but saw her not, nor list'ning heard.

" Blood dash'd into my eyes, and groans came in  
each word.

490

" Thus guilt makes cowards, and so fools all sense.  
" Visions have substance, and have souls intense  
" As our quick minds. I could with reason still  
" This inward storm, for reason serves the will ;  
" But conscience is oppos'd. I would atone 495  
" For one foul act by many a virtuous one.  
" Could I annih'late matter, space, and time,  
" And the vast universe, I could not crime  
" Undo once done. It boots not shrinking back.  
" Lash'd to the wheel, we must endure the rack." 500

## XX.

Slowly around his stately form he threw  
His sable cloak, and thoughtful thence withdrew.  
The squire's approach announced that ready wait  
His num'rous escort mounted at the gate.  
They ask his will. " For Naworth," briefly said. 505  
In silence onward mov'd the cavalcade,  
And soon around its echoing court-yard rung  
The clang of hoofs and arms, as warriors flung



The curious, wond'ring still of what none knew, 515  
With added surmise prov'd conjecture true.

"'Twas strange ! What meant the gloom their  
chieftain wore ?

" Why liv'd he more retir'd than heretofore ?

" His halls were silent, and but seldom guest

" Partook of cheer his coldness slightly press'd. 530

" Ne'er alter'd much his fixed and constant gaze.

" Save when remembrance chilled it to amaze.

" Why knelt he long with arms in suppliciance  
cross'd,

" Before the shrine in beauteous Lanercost ?

" Why had his hand such lavish wealth bestow'd, 535

" To rear those walls so sumptuously endow'd ?

" Alone he pass'd the solitary day,

" Or with some holy priest retir'd to pray,

" And nightly sought his chapel's dreary aisle,

" Where rows of dead in ghastly sculpture smile. 540

" There were who knew, but would with caution tell,

" Lest that was prov'd which not to know was well.

“ But, on the night young Beuth was lost, the clang

“ Of clashing arms within the castle rang,

“ And through the gates, locked trebly fast and barr’d, 545

“ Dusk figures glided by the trembling guard.

“ Nay more, a body, dripping with its blood,

“ Two murd’ers bore away into the wood.

“ ’Twas strange!” And then for these portents a cause.

“ Ranulph could long defy the warden laws 550

“ When Scotland’s David and Earl Hen’ry came

“ Against their lord, to urge the Saxon’s claim

“ (Gils Beuth’s), whose sudden death had brought  
such change

“ As now they witness’d. ’Twas to them most  
strange!”

Thus circling on the busy whisper sped. 555

“ But what to them what meddling Saxon bled!

“ Lord Robert sure his pleasure’s will might do,

“ If not on friends, at least upon a foe.

“ They were his vassals : and, whate’er his will,

“ ’Twas theirs to honour with submission still.” 560

## XXII.

Such were the tales with which Suspicion  
chain'd

His servants' ears, and long in pairs detain'd.

More darkly certain from each tongue they grew,

And repetition prov'd them wholly true.

First a stray word with skilful bias sent

564

Wide of the mark, but true to the intent.

Then half a hint; but, lest reveal'd too plain,

With dext'rous double home it runs again.

Then more direct: "Strange words had struck an  
ear

"Which chance intruded on his walks too near." 570

Thus plain all's told, they wonder it should strike

Others the same—"How strange!—all thought alike!"

What long had shock'd some individual breast,

Told but to one, electrifies the rest;

And, since no hearer wishes to refute

575

His own belief, 'tis placed beyond dispute.

## XXIII.

From Gilsland (Naworth's fair domain) expell'd,  
The Beuths of other times retreated, quell'd  
By that proud Norman whose rapacious hand  
Conquer'd, to desolate the ravaged land, 550  
Nobles of slaves and slaves of nobles made,  
Till subjects till'd the land which once they sway'd.  
The rebel's forfeit home (thus worse than shame  
Still brands the losing patriot's darken'd name)  
The royal charter gave to one whose son 555  
Knows not repose for what his hands have done.  
Few years he gave his rival. Scarce was heard  
The claim revived his high ambition fear'd.  
Not the slight madness of a moment's pain  
Fever'd his soul and scorch'd his desp'rate brain; 560  
Nor that cold, calm, unalterable hate  
Which sees the act and longs to perpetrate,—  
Nor that indiff'rence with which souls are hurl'd  
Faster by man than nature from the world,—

Could urge (whatever else the chord                    595  
Which mov'd his breast) to what his heart abhorr'd  
Were his, while others drain'd th' enliv'ning  
    bowl,

The nightly vigil and the parchment scroll,  
The taper's studious gleam, the aspect pale  
As Horror list'ning Guilt's abhorrent tale,                    600  
The night of anguish and the morn of gloom,  
The eye whose gaze was ever on the tomb.

## XXIV.

Ambitious—borne by an impetuous tide.  
Of daring hopes—he yielded to his pride.  
There was the rock which shatter'd. He must rush                    605  
On, though he felt th' opposing mass would  
    crush.

Behind were terrors which he sought to shun,  
Scarce dreaded more than those he rush'd upon.  
High on the verge of a dim precipice,  
Chas'd by the foe, he plung'd into th' abyss.                    610



## XXV.

Lo! where from yonder lattice twinkling gray  
His pale lamp struggles with the beams of day  
Still o'er the cumbrous volume pores his eye,  
As if to pierce the shades of destiny.  
'Twas said in whispers ere his guilt allow'd 614  
A darker legend to amuse the crowd,  
And since by such as dared distrust the zeal  
Which at the holy altar bade him kneel  
For many an hour of time, whose tedious flight  
Urg'd on the days, alas! for him, too bright,— 615  
'Twas said his vision's fearful reach beheld  
What to no mortal eye should be reveal'd :  
He had been known, at midnight's dreary hour,  
To hold communion with some unseen power.  
Yes! oft a strange unearthly voice was known 616  
To make reply or question to his own ;  
And oft his earnest gesture was display'd,  
Mark'd out in gloomy and gigantic shade.

But those who watch'd (e'en then a pious few  
Were prompt to give the evil one his due) 630  
With far beyond their wonted truth could tell  
How but one shadow o'er the marble fell.  
When, like a restless tenant of the tomb  
Scar'd by morn's smile of mock'ry on his gloom,  
He left his vigils for the couch where rest 635  
Was but th' exhaustion of the heart oppress'd,  
His freed domestics gaz'd with doubt and fear  
On instruments—Heaven shield us!—that appear  
Form'd to work magic spells, with which he draws  
The mystic lines that give to demons laws. 640  
Books of dark signs, which, as th' intruder holds  
With wish to pry, shut close their wondrous folds!  
Oft when upon his startled silence broke  
The attendant's knock, or coming footsteps spoke  
Too loud, too harsh, for his o'erlabour'd brain, 645  
He started, wild!—his frame convuls'd with pain.  
Dark was the meaning of each mutter'd word,  
His hand in desp'rate phrenzy grasp'd his sword,

Till, chang'd as sudden as it came, the storm  
Vanish'd, or linger'd in a milder form. 650  
As in some chancel, o'er the marble cold,  
Through Gothic fretwork, or 'mid pillars old,  
Shines a funereal torch, here lost, and there  
More bright, or streaming with unnatural glare,  
His reason so emits distorted light, 655  
Like lightning flashes, burning, wild, and bright.  
No diligent observer's eye would trust  
So false a day; still sleeps unspent the gust.  
E'en when Remembrance struggles to renew  
Her ravish'd powers, th' illusions still pursue; 660  
With such high courtesy as grandeur gives  
To princes, he the menial slave receives,  
And begs be seated, while himself will stand  
To list whate'er the serf shall please command.

## XXVI.

Now was the dawn. He sought the fields afar; 665  
His hands were busied in the work of war.

These were no common foes, led on by one  
Whom shudd'ring Fear believ'd the devil's son,  
Whose troops, like wizard sprights, now here, now  
there,

Baffled pursuit and seem'd to wing the air, 670  
And sudden on their worn pursuers came,  
With midnight havoc and destructive flame.  
From tower, or rock, or glen whose darkness made  
More bright the flashing of each furious blade,  
They rush to combat, or with arrows pour 675  
Death o'er the field in one wide wasting show'r.

1. 1. 1.

1. 1. 2.

1. 1. 3.

1. 1. 4.

1. 1. 5.

1. 1. 6.

1. 1. 7.

1. 1. 8.

1. 1. 9.

1. 1. 10.

1. 1. 11.

1. 1. 12.

1. 1. 13.

1. 1. 14.

1. 1. 15.

### CANTO III.

—

#### I.

Moving in glory, like a coming god,  
Morn walks the heavens, and looks the light abroad.  
Unnumber'd worlds in unimagi'd space,  
Remotest atoms, catch the genial rays,  
Reflecting far beyond lost Fancy's flight, 5  
Through systems infinite, the blissful light,  
Till smallest atoms of those atom-spheres  
Drink the pure ray and raptur'd own it theirs—  
Till light awakes all life and each glad thing  
Sports in the beam and plies its filmy wing. 10  
Morn comes ! all beauteous ever-glorious morn,  
Of whose fair form young Hope again is born,  
And blue-eyed Rapture looking round with bliss,  
And rosy Health, and infant Happiness,

And smiling Hours, which bring with songs of joy 15  
Sweet Love in air-borne car, to bind with flowers the  
boy.

## II.

'Tis gladness all while to the heavens above  
Fair Earth unveils and tells her tale of love,  
And Day descends to kiss whate'er is sweet  
In that fair form, which still he loves to greet, 20  
Fresh, bright, and lovely, young as when his arms  
Embraced at first the virgin being's charms.  
'Tis gladness all ; nor earth to day shall waste  
Her hoarded bliss, since man will deign to taste.

## III.

There is a sound in Naworth's festive hall, 25  
The voice of Mirth proclaiming festival.  
Above the towers floats Gilsland's banner wide,  
Where herald-art displays the coming bride.

Charged in the centre of a noble field,  
The scutcheon of pretence adorns the shield. 30  
To day Lord Robert spreads the bridal feast,  
And opes his gates to every welcome guest ;  
And guests are gathering. Martial trumpets play  
Triumphant summons to the joyful day.  
Already crests, and plumes, and mantles fair, 35  
And blooming cheeks, and bounding hearts are there ;  
And Pleasure's rosy empire is begun,  
Nor must be ended with the setting sun.

## IV.

See, the gay company, from far and near,  
In thick'ning throngs and rich array appear. 40  
Emerging slow from wood or distant vale,  
Come knights with pennons streaming on the gale.  
With armour glitt'ring in the beams of morn,  
And prancing steed, and far resounding horn,  
Fast winding down from steepy crags is seen 45  
The eager huntsman, in his cassock green.



By Irthing's side, with Norway's princely bird  
Reclaimed on wrist, comes many a crested lord.  
With sumpter mules, and guard, and menial train,  
Slow moves the holy prelate o'er the plain, 30  
Pursued by crowds of zealous hearts, which press  
To catch the voice whose lightest sounds can bless.  
The palmer's cloak, the minstrel's lighter garb,  
The masker's group, the caracoling barb,  
The serf, the thane, the Norman cavalier, 55  
The vest embroider'd, and the shining spear,  
The high in blood, the silver-collar'd slave,  
The Saxon franklin, and the Templar brave,  
All, close commingling, hasten to the glee  
Of lavish Naworth's high festivity. 60

## V.

The banquet waits. Through gay and glitt'ring  
rooms,  
Bestrew'd with flowers and breathing rich perfumes,

Fair dames are straying. In the cooler grove  
Bright eyes consent, while lips refuse to love.  
Fair forms are sporting o'er the dewy lawn, 6  
Where graceful runs the lightly bounding fawn.  
In blooming bowers, where love's first dawning glows,  
A brighter beam than morn's is on the rose,  
From eyes whose light of timid loveliness  
Droops at the tender tale they dare confess. 7  
In gardens, where clear founts in wanton play  
Fling high and cool the graceful falling spray,  
From bough to bough rich silken canopies  
Shade from the heat of day's unclouded skies.

## VI.

And now the minstrel's happy measures move 75  
To ancient harmonies and lays of love;  
Wild numbers, though most sweet when sung by one  
Whose heart could make the melting theme his own,  
Such as of old the northern Sagas sung  
To scenes more rugged, in another tongue, 76

When Lodbrog's arm the rescued fair receiv'd,  
And himself sung the glories he achiev'd.  
And ne'er had Naworth heard a sweeter strain  
When graced by minstrels of the royal train, ;  
When ladies' love to knights was dearer far, 15  
The victory theirs, than all the pomp of war,  
When oft some princely wand'rer of the grove,  
Led by adventure wild or faithful love  
(Perchance some brave Sir Cauline, gentle knight  
In pensive exile banish'd from delight, 20  
Some young Rinaldo borne from distant land  
To give Geneura to her lover's hand,  
Some King Estmere, with harp and magic bound,  
To bear the bride from foll'wer of Mahound,  
Or one returning from the holy tomb 25  
With much to tell of wonders and of Rome),  
Here found repose and entertainment free,  
With plenteous feast and sweetest minstrelsy.  
On happy wings the blissful moments flew  
No thought of care the guests delighted knew. 30

The mirth, the cheer, made glad each joyous breast;  
While Echo joined the laugh, and told again the jest:

## VII.

Without the walls long rows of tents are placed,  
With Gilsland's proud armorial bearings graced.  
There serfs and vassals in the shade recline, 105  
Regaled with feast and draughts of muscadine.  
To twenty slaves with largess is decreed,  
To grace the day, glad Freedom's welcome meed.  
The mime, the jest, the revel, and the game,  
Change slaves to lords save only in the name; 110  
And all at least are seeming happy there:  
Why should not man be ever free from care?

## VIII.

Amid his guests the noble baron moves,  
Courteous to all, with all-exchanging loves.  
His gloom for happier looks is laid aside, 115  
Nor wears his brow one line more dark than pride.

But he who can more closely criticise  
Sees transient shades along his features rise,  
Not such as clouds on shining ocean cast—  
No outward objects gliding swiftly past. 120  
'Twas from within the spreading darkness rose,  
Like rocks whose sable hue more blackly shows  
When heaven is shining on the crystal wave,  
Then only rising from their living grave.

## IX.

And now the sun of beauty's dazzling light 125  
Illumes the hall and makes the day more bright.  
Cold is the heart and more than mortal dull  
That sees not, feels not, Ada beautiful.  
With such a form, not that deserted shore  
To which rude hands forlorn Olympia bore 130  
Could on itself impel the heart to run  
In search of bliss, the outward void to shun.  
No, no—with one like her beside the while,  
It were a paradise—that lonely isle.

Days might roll on in one unvarying mood      135  
Till nature's self grew sick of solitude,  
Nights might return as they before had done,  
Dark hours long ling'ring for the morning sun,  
Till rock, and wave, and all-pervading sky,  
Pall'd of their own dull gazing vacancy;      140  
But Ada still, to him who saw, would be  
All which the heart could feel or eye could wish  
to see.

## X.

And such, it may be, was the thought of him  
Whose eye e'en then some feeling seem'd to dim,  
Some dark remembrance, like a shadow thrown      145  
From worlds more sad and fearful than our own.  
With not a cloud his brightness to destroy,  
Darkness eclips'd the noontide of his joy.  
Few mark'd, none guess'd—so hastily he woke  
From that strange dream—what spirit's voice had  
spoke.      150

It was a moment's bitter agony,  
Such as might set a weaker nature free,  
Could it thus suffer. His unyielding pride  
Still mounts, nor heeds the arrow in his side,  
And serves to save his yet undarken'd name      155  
From what it led to seek—impending shame.  
“ What! before these shall weakness all disclose ?  
“ No ! rather let me humble to my foes.”

## XI.

With step elastic, free though noble mien,  
The lofty genius of the glitt'ring scene,      160  
Graceful he moves, the coming bride to meet.  
With silv'ry veil loose flowing to her feet  
She comes, like those celestial forms which deign'd  
In rays of light on Ida to descend.  
Gentle as morning, each love-lighted charm      165  
Beaming with bliss and delicately warm.  
Not Galatea in the silver tide  
More brightly beautiful than this young bride.

So moves, dim seen through floating mists, the star  
Of bright-eyed morn, but she more beauteous far. 70  
Her vesture white, white wreaths her hair adorn.  
Her pale blue robe by virgin hands is borne.  
As sun-bright clouds or Love's own light-wing'  
doves

Float on the air, so gracefully she moves.  
Oh woman ! loveliest of all lovely things, 115  
Whose eye around more vivid beauty flings  
Than the sunn'd plumage of a seraph's wings  
Playing before heaven's radiant throne of light,  
Glancing off smiles and waving with delight.  
Spirit of beauty ! Woman is the soul 160  
Of all things lovely, breathing through the  
whole

Seen by the poet's and the lover's eye.  
Her charms illumine the earth, the wave, the sky.  
Fields, flowers, gems, planets—all below, above—  
All tell of woman's charms and woman's love. 165



## XII.

Fairest of such was Ada. She was, too,  
 Tend'rest of such. Love's temple never knew  
 More fulness of devotion. Oh! than her  
 Never saw Hymen purer worshipper,  
 When Innocence receiv'd, in flow'ry hands, 190  
 Infant Simplicity at Hymen's hands.  
 Could she not love, this earth to her were one  
 Of alien element. All concord gone,  
 It were an universe, and she, oh! she  
 Alone there placed to find no sympathy 195  
 From soul, nor bird, nor flower—a weary wild  
 Where nothing was when nothing loved or smiled.

## XIII.

Joy flows in fullest tide—no bounds to bliss.  
 Leaps every heart. The bridal morn is this.  
 Dance the freed slaves unfetter'd as the air, 200  
 Dance those in fetters—none are happier there.

The slave forgets the lord, the lord the slave—  
Equals in joy, in sorrow, and the grave.

## XIV.

In solemn rev'rence at the altar-stone  
Bends the link'd pair, while kneels around each one ; 205  
The vows are spoken ; and the bonds of faith,  
Come when he will, must only yield to Death.  
'Tis done. They dream, they breathe, but happi-  
ness.

The choir is still. The priest awaits to bless.  
In sacred robes, erect, with hands uprais'd, 210  
Heavenward the father's holy vision gaz'd.  
Seem'd it the blissful rapture of his soul  
Held whisperings with God ; and silence stole  
Deep to each heart with heavenly eloquence,  
Such as night's starry beauties can dispense— 215  
Mute, but within how burning and intense !  
Studding the darkness of man's mortal night  
With a blest imagery of celestial light.

Why stays the benediction? Waits the throng.  
 Communes he mutely with the heavens thus long? 210  
 Enquiring looks are on him. Fixed he stands,  
 Wilder'd—amaz'd—with still uplifted hands.  
 At once all rise, and turning with wild glare,  
 " 'Tis he!—Oh God!—my murder'd victim there!"  
 Far through the isles reverberating rang 215  
 That dreadful cry. A rush—a groan—a clang  
 Of rattling armour rose. A crunching sound  
 Shiver'd with jagged horror those around.

## XV.

Shrilly above the shouts of horror loud  
 One voice was heard, as from the thunder-cloud 220  
 The eagle's to her young, as from the wave  
 A mother's for the child she dies to save—  
 Shril as the matron's shriek, when terror dumb  
 Through blazing streets beholds the mad foe come—  
 Oh, sadly shrill! in tones whose anguish went 225  
 Through every soul, nor wall, nor battlement.

Repress'd. More piercing through the sky  
It fled, despairing in its agony.  
It was as if an angel, in its flight  
Too far from heaven was caught by fiends of night 240  
And borne away, would to its own bright sphere  
Send those despairing accents. On the ear  
Whose deaden'd sense seem'd harden'd into stone  
By battles' uses—deaf to plaint or groan—  
It came with lightning's speed, and struck the heart 245  
Which never shook till then, nor would depart,  
But, like the dread of evil undefin'd,  
Came back and pain'd again. The ruin'd mind,  
The heart whose shrieking hopelessness had spoken,  
Was Ada's, when that gentle heart fell broken. 250

## XVI.

Amid them, ghastly in his mail, there stood  
The murder'd Beuth! smear'd horribly with blood.  
High rose the plume of pride above a brow  
That well becomes the dark'ning visor now.

Frightful to view, whate'er the helm conceals, 255  
 That glaring eye enough for man reveals,  
 Burning more fiercely than th' ensanguin'd field,  
 Caught by the sun, of that red blazon'd shield.  
 Hack'd was the mail; and bloody clefts still told  
 Where, ebbing fast, the tide of life had roll'd. 260  
 Through the gash'd helm the grisly scalp appear'd,  
 Its sable curls with clotted gore beamear'd.  
 Then shrunk the coward's soul; the better brave  
 With shudd'ring view'd the vision of the grave.

## XVII.

Still, as a sculptur'd warrior—gaz'd upon 265  
 By forms with less of life and more of stone—  
 The figure stood. It mov'd not, spake no word;  
 And only Terror's gasping breath was heard.

## XVIII.

Where is the bridegroom? Mark that burning eye  
 In red ire fix'd upon his agony. 270

Pale as the altar he had knelt beside,—  
Pale as each fair cold feature of his bride,—  
Riven by convulsion such as victims feel  
When quiver nerve and sinew on the wheel,—  
Pallid and deathly as the glaring snow 275  
Lit by some fiery mount's terrific glow,  
Or moonbeams on the whitening bones which lie  
In charnel vaults,—pale as the corse whose eye  
Upturn'd to midnight stars, on billows toss'd,  
Floats drench'd and cold, far borne from ev'ry coast,— 280  
He lies before the altar, bleeding, mute,  
His outstretch'd form beneath the spectre's foot,  
Despair, in ice-drops, o'er his forehead strews  
The deadly coldness of the marble's dews.  
Scarce beats his heart, and scarce his bosom moves. 285  
His clos'd eye seeks no more the all it loves.  
He heeds not once that form, those features fair,  
In still unconsciousness beside him there,  
Turns not to kiss. Alas! he knows them not;  
E'en she—his bride—his Ada, is forgot. 290

Heaves to the foot that breast? descend it must.  
 'Twas but a sigh. Could that change man to dust?

## XIX.

The spectre-form hath doff'd his mailed guise,  
 And, shrouded in the terrors of surprise,  
 Bursts on their shrinking sight. What horrid glare 215  
 See they to raise those accents of despair?  
 Not the ghaſt ſkull, moiſt fleſh, and ribs of death;  
 'Tis Ranulph the wild outlaw!—his the breath  
 Uttering aſtride his victim, ere too late,  
 Hell's deepeſt curſe and more than fiendiſh hate. 220  
 Grasping, with outſtretch'd arm, the murd'rouſ knife  
 Yet dripping blood and reeking warm with life,  
 Rough in his ſhaggy veſts, he ſtands to dare  
 All ſtrife. A glutted tiger, in his lair,  
 On threat'ning foes and darker gath'ring crowds 225  
 Darts his fierce glance, like lightning amid clouds.  
 He watch'd his victim till no beat replied  
 Againſt the foot which trod the wounded ſide,

Then dash'd away the helm, and stood elate  
 In pride of villany. Secure his fate— 344  
 At least so deems he—chang'd his ire to mirth.  
 Strange horrid laughter. Are such sounds of earth,  
 Or execrations of lost souls which come  
 Echoed from altar, shrine, and vault, and tomb,  
 Cursing the earth from whence their anguish flows, 345  
 And laughing in wild mockery of their woes?  
 The statues gibber on the tombs, and grin,  
 Their pale lips stirr'd by some dark power within:  
 So feigns th' affrighted sense of those who view  
 And list such mirth as earth before ne'er knew. 346  
 With red arm bar'd aloft, "The sport is o'er;  
 "Dogs of the chase! behold your hunted boar  
 "Ript by his own tusks thus!" (he clench'd his blade),  
 "Down to thy sheath! for this we both were made.

XX.

But, while his lifted arm delays too long, 347  
 Seiz'd, bound, and fetter'd stands he 'mid the throng



Whose narrowing circle tells less fear'd the foes  
 In whose warm currents mortal being flows.  
 Death were too rich a boon—while life can give  
 One pang to quiv'ring nature he shall live. 330  
 Not yet to periah till each fibre crack,  
 Dissever'd and distorted on the rack.  
 Led out to tortures, o'er his features past  
 One change—his baffled purpose ; 'twas the  
 last.

Like horrid crags on which some beacon's light 335  
 Dies in red glare, his brow at once grew night ;  
 Sullen as waveless waters, where no tide  
 Stirs the dull mass—a black unmoving void.  
 Wild rose the gath'ring tumult, din, and shout  
 Of terror and confus'd surprise without. 340  
 Vassals, and men at arms, and mingled slaves,  
 Sort with the nobler there. The guard scarce  
 saves

From readier death (so rage all to destroy)  
 The wretch reserv'd to feast man's sternest joy.

## XXI.

Their chieftain lies no more with blood around ; 345  
And, if few hearts that love him now surround,  
He wants not eager hands to stanch and bind the  
wound.

But she who might with gentler touch have dried  
The cold drops from his brow—his hapless bride—  
She was not there. The oratory dim 350  
His rest, and stranger 'tendants gaze on him.  
He heeds them not ; yet scarce they call it death.  
The faint pulse throbs again ; but still no breath.  
Again one gentle beating. Oh ! how oft  
Despair falls back, and glad Hope springs aloft, 355  
At that faint motion, which perchance but flows  
From the last strife which ends the sufferer's woes.  
'Tis life at least, and hope to this will cling  
E'en when the soul has pruned its upward wing.  
And once again with stronger life it moves. 360  
Oh ! to the agonizing gaze which loves,

Each falt'ring beat renew'd, again delay'd  
As if all motion were for ever stay'd,  
Is anguish, which the troubled heart must hold  
And choke with bursting sobs, till all it loves is cold. 365

## XXII.

Sweetly a fount plays o'er its marble pool,  
Where weeping maids lave fast the waters cool.  
They snatch, and, hastening to the terrace, bear  
Where Ada lies, and dash the dew drops there.  
She breathes. The freshness of the cooler gale 370  
Plays on her cheek ; but cold, unmoving, pale,  
She lies, and lifeless seems she as the face  
Of Beauty mirror'd in the liquid glass.  
And they have bared her bosom's shining snow,  
To sprinkle there the wave ; and faint, and low, 375  
The breath beneath flows like a stream concealed  
By its pure surface into ice congealed.  
With her fair tresses, loose and unconfin'd,  
All heedless sports the wanton summer's wind,

Kisses her marble brow and eyelids blue      100  
 (Lids like thin clouds which heaven is shining through),  
 And, like an infant on the lifeless breast,  
 Unconscious plays and murmurs into rest.  
 The sky above in brightest beauty glows.  
 Blithely a bee hums round an op'ning rose.      105  
 The glancing stream, by shrubs which skirt the lawn  
 Half hid, runs murm'ring near the startled fawn.  
 The happy birds in many voices sweet  
 Tell of their joys ; and, where the mountains meet  
 Far off the heavens, all does as happy seem      110  
 As if earth held no woe and grief was but a dream.

## XXIII.

The gates and towers with ghastly triumph show  
 How fierce revenge, the vanish'd sun how slow.  
 The creaking engine, and the yell of joy  
 O'er one whose only weakness was to die,      115  
 Ceas'd with the sun's last ray, when, clenching close  
 His hoarded breath, Ranulph still dared his foes.

Sullen he passed, and left their wrath to tear  
The flesh whose death-smile mocked at Hate's despair.  
And with him died what he would not unfold, 400  
And men but guess'd the past ; but deeds unroll'd  
The close seal'd volume of confed'rate guilt,  
And all knew *why* the guiltless blood was spilt.  
His entrance there requir'd no treach'rous slave  
To aid—the day an easy access gave. 405  
Nor masking guise was far to seek, the cloud  
Whose darkness such a fiery storm might shroud.  
Such, o'er the mail (which, hurl'd away from light,  
In some black cave had lain since that dread night.  
Its aspect fearful as whate'er pertains 410  
To Murder's use—all blackly foul with stains),  
Would safely bring to where the wretch might stray  
Through the dark maze of many a winding way,  
And rush upon his victim's frantic dread  
The frightful sepulchre's uprisen dead. 415  
Urged to his fortune's verge, close on his path  
The bloodhound's cry and foemen's bitter wrath,

Hopeless of aid, with only death around,  
He fled till his last hold was hostile ground.  
Now was the hour foredoomed—he who had scourged 425  
His bandit troops, and its last fetters forged,  
To-day feasts unrestrain'd. One blow gives back  
Triumph to vengeance,—saves him from the rack.  
Thus would he slake at last that vengeful thirst  
Which e'en in death gurgled with sounds accurst. 430

## XXIV.

But holy men surround the dying lord.  
Some kindly cup had with faint life restored :  
'Twas but a moment, and the light forsook  
His glazed dim eye, but not till cross and book  
Had given to hope his soul was with the blest, 435  
So calmly sank he to his mortal rest.  
Once sought his eye around with look intense,  
And his lips moved, but utterance came not thence.  
Their thought enterprets all : his stricken bride,  
Oh ! where was she ? she bends not by his side. 440

Far better so, alas ! her shatter'd brain  
Had mock'd his woe and smiled upon his pain.

## XXV.

And all from that sad altar-stone are gone—  
The slayer, victim, she who recks of none ;  
And, coldly trickling down from pillars tall 444  
And altar stained, the crimson life-drops fall ;  
Around, the prints of footsteps in the tide,  
Which curdling shrinks with half its wonted pride,  
As if disdaining vulgar touch, ere cold,  
With its last warmth, in gather'd mass it roll'd. 445  
There lies the pride one breast could feel full well,  
Yonder the dust ; the rest let heralds tell.

## XXVI.

Again 'tis morn ! In Ada's chamber burns  
The waning light her maidens watch'd by turns ;  
Yet Ada stirs not there, and slumber those 446  
Whose wakeful hours should guard her first repose.

Outworn and wearied each had sunk to rest,  
 Nor dream'd they of the chamber's vanish'd guest.  
 They woke, but not to find in slumber deep  
 The frenzied heart whose sorrows knew not sleep : 455  
 She in deep silence from her couch had gone,  
 Her purpose hid, her path observed by none.  
 Whither her footsteps ? 'Twas in vain they sought,  
 And darker grew conjecture's wand'ring thought.  
 Within the room, or on the toilet lay 460  
 No gem nor robe which graced her bridal day,  
 Betokening wildness in the grief which wore  
 The dress of joy, when joy was felt no more.  
 They search'd, but saw not—Oh ! they could not  
 see—  
 They sought the hall of death—'tis Ada—she ! 465

## XXVII.

Softly !—oh ! not too rudely let us wake  
 Remembrance in a heart its shock must break.  
 No, no ! the desolating storm is o'er,



And her torn heart, alas ! can break no more.

She does not hear, nor heed those accents bland ; 470

Heart, eye, yea all seems fixed on that cold hand

Clasp'd in her own. Her head droop'd on a breast

Intensity of woe has lulled to rest.

What was aught else but him ? and he was  
nought,

Save a dark shade on memory's troubled thought. 475

With her pure cheek's pale hue, the changeless form

Of her still grief, with mortal tints scarce warm,

In that black hall, beside the solemn bier

Dim lighted by tall tapers glimm'ring near,

She might have seemed some visitant from heaven 480

Sent to proclaim the spirit's deeds forgiven—

Some daughter of the skies, in marble, keeping

Watch o'er the tomb where her lost love lies sleeping.

So beautiful she sate, so still, so fair,

To breathe her holy presence in the air 485

Might calm to sweet repose the soul of madness.

Joy looked not half so blest as Ada's sadness ;

And sorrow's smile, which through that stainless  
cheek

Had stolen unbidden from the heart too weak,  
Shone like a pensive moon, whose mournful light  
Saddens the heart her cold beams would delight.  
It was a star's pale gleam, which, where 't has  
been,

Shines lovely still, itself no longer seen.

Sad as remembrance of the past, awaking  
Light in whose rays the hopeless heart is breaking.

Sure Ada sleeps ! In vain from that deep trance

They would recal her mind, and fixed glance.

They bend to raise.—The flow'ry wreath which bound

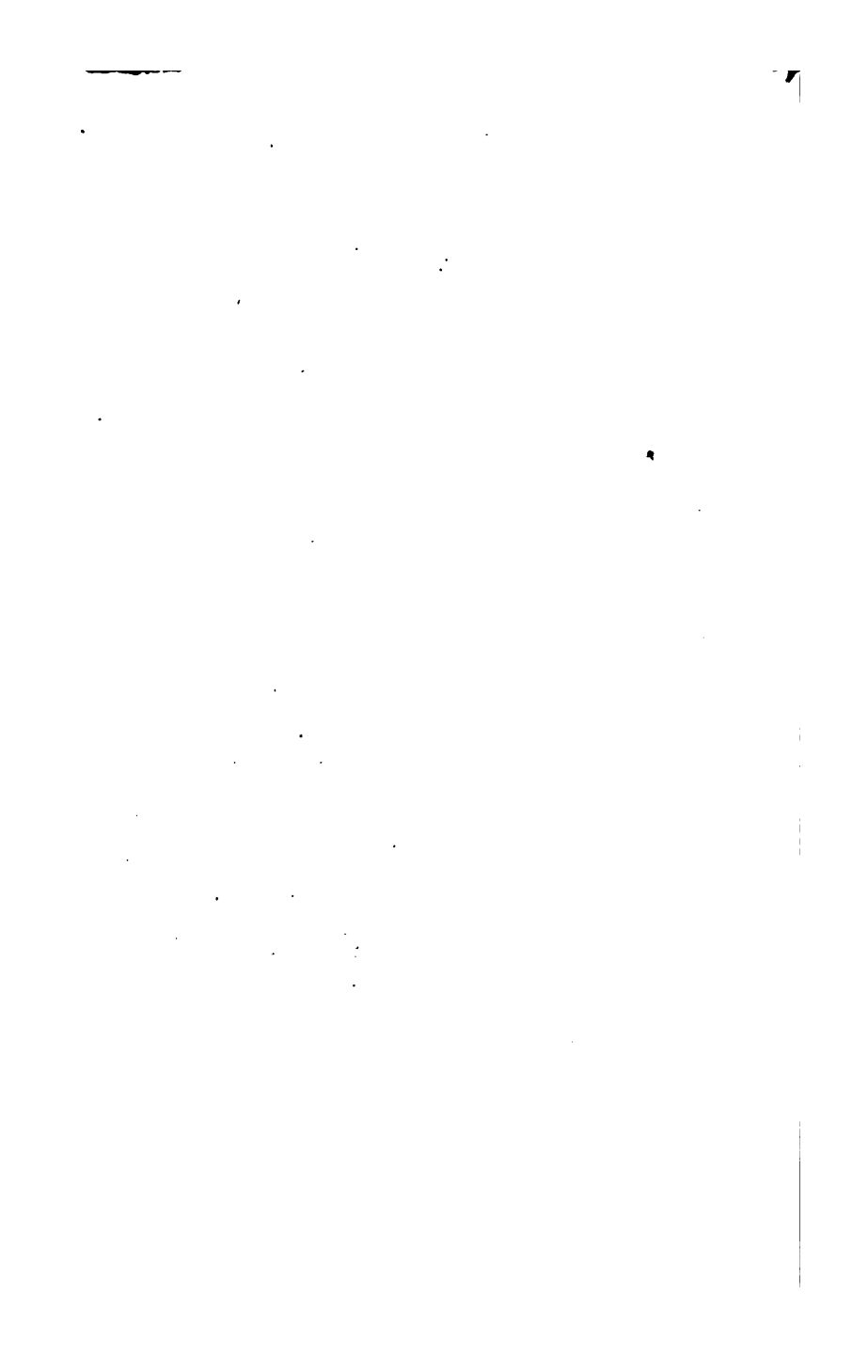
Her tresses strew'd its wither'd leaves around ;

And her loose locks play'd o'er a brow of snow

They knew not lifeless, cold, and still, till now.

That touch hath told a tale heaven pitying hears,

And sheds o'er human woes celestial tears.



## NOTES TO CANTO I.

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WHAT follows is from the work mentioned in "Advertisement," and will perhaps be sufficient for the reader's curiosity.

"Gils Beuth, son of that Beuth who was lord possessor of the country at and before the Norman conquest, laid claim to some part of Gilsland, and Robert de Vallibus slew him at a meeting for agreement appointed between them under trust and assurance of safety, which shameful action made the said Robert leave arms and betake himself to the study of the law, in which he made such proficiency that he became a judge. But this murder still stuck upon his mind until, according to the superstition of those times, he had made expiation to holy church by building the abbey of Lanercost, and endowing it with that very patrimony which had occasioned the murder."

Note 1, section vii. page 10, line 28.

*"And Havoc gloating o'er the bloody scene."*

As a specimen of the ravages frequent upon the Borders at a later period than that to which this description applies, an account is annexed, copied from Hayne's State Papers, of the damage done in a single forray by one of the principals in these labours of destruction, whose

example the subordinates were by no means slow at following.

"In the year 1545, in a forray made by the Earl of Hertford, between the 8th and 23rd of September, the sum total of mischief is thus set down.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Monasteries or friar houses burnt or destroyed .. | 7   |
| Castles, towers, and piles .....                  | 16  |
| Market towns .....                                | 5   |
| Villages .....                                    | 243 |
| Milns .....                                       | 13  |
| Hospitals .....                                   | 3"  |

P 52.

Note 2. section viii. line 44.

*"Revenge! I shouted: wood and cave demand  
Revenge!"*

"The spirit of revenge was encouraged, not only by the manners, but, what is more remarkable, by the laws of those ages. If any one thought the prosecution of an injury offered to his family too troublesome or too dangerous, the Salique laws permitted him publicly to desist from demanding vengeance; but the same laws, in order to punish his cowardice and want of affection to his family, deprived him of the right of succession."—*Hainaul's Abrégé Chronol.* p. 18.

Note 3, section viii. line 77.

*"They might have spared, no demon grasp'd the hand,  
And made it strike."*

Having no conception of moral obligation, or of law beyond that of brute force, nothing would appear to Ranulph more anomalous than the idea of a human being, in action, whose

will at the same time remained opposed or neutral ; unless that being was operated upon and excited into motion by an external or physical agent.

This obtuseness of vision, or blindness to a moral necessity, which compels man to act regardless of the will, and makes him punish an object even while emotions of pity are created for it in his breast, causes Ranulph to say, a few lines preceding that referred to above,

*" There is a lurking fiend in every breast  
Which makes all mortal misery its jest."*

Note 4, section viii. line 105.

*" To give desire its glut to spurn and kill."*

The character of Ranulph may offend the taste, but can never be productive of evil. He will gain only the abhorrence of every reader. Not like vice arrayed in all the blandishings of allurements, his actions and his feelings (for his most intellectual qualities are of no higher a nature) can excite neither emulation, admiration, nor a desire to imitate.

Note 5, section ix. line 13.

*" His waist was girded by a leathern belt."*

Such was the dress usually worn by the Saxon Ceorles, and by the lowest order of slaves or villains.

Note 6, section ix. line 19.

*" The collar which his neck in bondage wore."*

With the Saxons, as well as Normans, a collar made of some metal, sometimes of silver, soldered fast round the neck, was the common badge of servitude. Inscribed on it was usually the name of the wearer and also that of the owner.

Note 7, section x. line 2.

*"As learning's night all ignorance and crimes."*

Dr. Robertson, in his "View of the State of Europe," says, "Persons of the highest rank and in the most eminent stations could not read or write. Many of the clergy did not understand the breviary which they were obliged daily to recite; some of them could scarcely read it."

Note 8, section x. line 12.

*"Tricked their own statutes and accepted bribes."*

"It appears that the ancient kings of England put themselves entirely on a footing with the barbarous eastern princes whom no man must approach without a present." "The king's protection and good offices of every kind were bought and sold. Robert Grislet paid twenty marks that the king would help him against the Earl of Mortaigne in a certain plea. Ralph de Breckham gave a hawk that the king would protect him. Robert de Veaux gave five of the best palfreys that the King would hold his tongue about Henry Pinel's wife."

See Hume, Appendix II. p. 139.

Note 9. section xii. line 14.

*"And made a monster worthy of the times."*

Few things more strikingly exhibit the barbarity of even the highest ranks of society in past times than the instructions of the Privy Council of England to the Earl of Hertford, Commander of the Forces into Scotland, A. D. 1544, at which period civilization is considered to have made some progress in the world.

The following are extracts :—

" But only for that journey to put all to fire and sword, burn Edinburgh town, so used and defaced, that when you have gotten what you can of it, it may remain for ever a perpetual memory of the vengeance of God lightened upon it for their falsehood and dialoyalty : \* \* sack Leith, and subvert it, and all the rest, putting man, woman, and child to fire and sword, without exception, when any resistance shall be made against you : \* \* not forgetting among all the rest so to spoil and turn upside down the cardinal's town of St. Andrew's as the upper sort may be the nether, and not one *stoke* stand upon another, sparing no creature alive within the same, specially such as either in friendship or blood be allied unto the Cardinal : \* \* \* His Majesty thinketh verily, and so all we, ye shall find this *journey* succeedeth this way most to His Majesty's honour," &c.

Note 10, section *xxi*.

" *The light before it sent its shadow grey.*"

It is not for the writer to determine whether this line be poetry or merely nonsense : it is certainly no wilder a flight of imagination than much which passes current for truth in our present theories of light.

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## NOTES TO CANTO II.

Note 1, section *ix*. line 9.

" *A brown mist wraps the stone,*" &c.

For "brown" read "gray."



Note 2, section xix. line 72."

*"Confederate foes on every side enfold."*

To apprehend and punish a criminal often required the union and effort of half a kingdom.

§ Robertson's History of Scotland, v. i. p. 19.

Note 3, section xxi. line 22.

*"Before the shrine in beauteous Lanercost."*

The priory of Lanercost was founded by Robert de Vallibus, lord of Gilsland, in the year 1160, as an expiation for the murder of Gils Beuth. It was dedicated to Mary Magdalen by Bernard, Bishop of Carlisle. In the Lanercost Register is a description of the lands with their boundaries, which his charter granted to the priory, concluding with these words: "and this he did for the soul of King Henry the Second, who granted and confirmed the same to his father and him; and for the souls of his father Hubert and his mother Gracia, and all his ancestors and successors."

Note 4, section xxi. line 29.

*"When Scotland's David and Earl Henry came."*

In the reign of King Stephen (1138), when the Scots, under their King David and Earl Henry his son, possessed the county of Cumberland, they stood with the ancient heir Gils Beuth against the title of de Vallibus.

Burns and Nicholson's History of Cumberland.

## NOTES TO CANTO III.

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Note 1, section iv. line 9.

*"By Irthing's side with Norway's princely bird."*

The Irthing is a small stream which runs near to the Castle of Naworth.

The hawks of Norway were held in the highest estimation. In the time of the Normans a person of rank scarcely stirred out without his hawk upon his wrist, which in old pictures is almost the criterion of Nobility.

Note 2, section vi. line 5.

*"Such as of old the northern Sagas sung."*

See Saxon Grammar, page 152.

Note 3, section vi. line 7.

*"When Lodbrog's arms the rescued fair received,  
And himself sung the glories he achieved."*

King Regner Lodbrog, who reigned in Denmark about the year 800. His exploits are in the true spirit of the ancient metrical romances. A Swedish officer named Orme (which in the Islandic language signifies serpent) was entrusted with the care of a very beautiful princess, by the King her father. The officer, falling in love with the lady, refused to yield her up at the father's request. A proclamation was issued that whoever would rescue the princess should have her in marriage. Regner un-

dertook the glorious enterprise, and received her as the reward of his prowess. In a poem still extant, and said to have been written by Regner himself, the lady is represented as being detained by a dreadful dragon, which was slain by this hero, who restores the lady to happiness by at once conferring upon her liberty and love. A translation of this poem is among "Five Pieces of Runic Poetry," printed for Dodale, 1764.

Note 4, section vi. line 15.

"*Perchance some brave Sir Cauline,*" &c.

See the Ballad of Sir Cauline—Relics of Ancient English Poetry, vol. i. page 157.

Note 5, section vi. line 17.

"*Some young Rinaldo,*" &c.

Ariosto.

Note 6, section vi. line 19.

"*Some King Estmere,*" &c.

See this romantic legend preserved in Percy's Relics, vol. i. page 177.

Note 7, section ix. line 6.

"*To which rude hands forlorn Olympia bore.*"

Ariosto.

Note 8, section xxiii. line 26.

"*The bloodhound's cry and foemen's bitter wrath.*"

"Warrants were issued for the keeping of slough dogs for pursuing offenders through the sloughs, mosses, and bogs that

were not passable, but by those who were acquainted with the various intricate bye-paths and turnings. These offenders were peculiarly styled moss troopers, and the dogs were commonly called blood-hounds, which were kept in use till within the memory of many of our fathers. And all along the pursuit of hot-trod (*flagrante delicto*—with red hand, as the Scots term it) was by horn and hound and voice.”

Burns and Nicholson's Cumberland.



